THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) As per latest information, the total number of Indian fishermen in Pakistan's custody is approximately 900. Most of the fishermen belong to Gujarat, Diu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Government of India is in constant touch with Pakistan Government through diplomatic channels for early release of all the Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails. Pakistan Government has granted consular access to 266 Indian fishermen. Pakistan Government has recently conveyed its agreement to release these fishermen. Government is trying for early consular access for the remaining Indian fishermen.

(c) The issue of release and repartriation of the apprehended fishermen has been taken up with the Pakistan Government at various high-level meetings such as that of Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary. Steps have also been taken at the local level to sensitize the fishermen on the issue.

Extradition of Iqbal Mirchi

2283. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the drug lord, Iqbal Mirchi, who is wanted in many crimes in India, was traced down in Illinois, USA by the federal Agency of USA;

(b) if so, what moves Government are making to extradite him to India; and

(c) how the Ministry is co-ordinating with the Federal Agency of USA to extradite Mirchi to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.